

VZCZCXRO3108
PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #1492/01 2531749
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 101749Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6819
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001492

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [SMIG](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: POSTCARD FROM CAP HAITIEN

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 515

11. SUMMARY: The chief executive official in Haiti's North Department (capital: Cap-Haitien) described his two priorities as an improved security environment to attract foreign investment and a more effective natural disaster response. The Department chief executive said that the new mayor of Cap-Haitien, Michel St. Croix, has responded quickly to residents' requests for garbage collection and a cleaner community. The central government's lack of funding for this region and its lack of bureaucratic capacity, even in managing paychecks to government employees, is an economic constraint. The Cap-Haitien chapter of the Women's Association of Haiti (AFASDA) is also making itself felt, having provided legal counsel to prosecute the first rape case in Cap-Haitien. End Summary.

PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

12. Cap-Haitien, situated on the north coast of Haiti and the capital of the North Department, is the country's second largest city, with a population of approximately 212,000. The Delegate of the North, Georgemain Prophete, on July 25 met with Poloff in his Cap-Haitien office to discuss his current projects. Prophete is the US equivalent of a governor, exercising executive government authority and coordinating all government action in the North Department. Prophete's two major priorities in the region are security and natural disaster response. Regarding security, he stated that he works closely with MINUSTAH and the United Nations Police (UNPOL) to improve law enforcement. He also said that he wants to improve security in order to attract foreign investment. Concerning disaster response, he stressed that frequent flooding causes as much damage as seasonal hurricanes.

13. Prophete described his relationship with the Minister of Finance, Daniel Dorsainvil, as cooperative. (Note: All financing for the North Department comes from the national government in Port-au-Prince. End Note.) Prophete said that the Mayor reacted quickly to local residents' requests for regular garbage collection.

14. Prophete concluded by identifying his biggest challenge. He described economic recovery in Cap-Haitien as slow compared to Port-au-Prince. The GoH's lack of bureaucratic capacity, even in managing paychecks to government employees, is an economic constraint. His eleven member staff, appointed in 2004, did not receive their first paychecks until June 2007, and then received 21 back-payments at once. Prophete said that this pattern cannot continue and hopes that the GoH can repair the payroll system so employees are paid on time. Prophete is looking into private funding

sources from local businesses and U.S. government agencies (such as USAID) to improve efficiency in his office. He said that he hardly has a ''dream team'' of efficient employees, but relies on a supplementary staff of volunteers to carry out routine administrative functions. He also deplored the poor state of infrastructure and the North Department's lack of financial resources, complaining that as the capital of Port-au-Prince absorbs a disproportionate share of funding from the national treasury. Prophete believes that the region would benefit from a strong support base in the national Parliament (he pointed to the strong lobby that the capital enjoyed by Jacmel and the Southeast Department) in order to make Cap-Haitien a priority on the national agenda.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION PROVIDES LEGAL ASSISTANCE

¶5. Poloff also met Elvire Eugene, the Founder and CEO of the Association of Women of Haiti (AFASDA) on July 26. Eugene said that AFASDA is an organization that works with women ''to empower them to take action for a more equitable society through active participation.'' Their projects focus on literacy, health, the environment, and running a training center for girls. Their legal assistance project recently helped bring to trial the first rape case in Cap-Haitien. The rapist was sentenced to ten years of hard labor in July ¶2005. Eugene said that she is proud that more women are taking advantage of AFASDA services since its creation in November 1997. She said that it is a sign that women are less afraid and more willing to fight social injustice.

COMMENT

PORT AU PR 00001492 002 OF 002

¶6. The lack of financial support from the central government continues to hinder progress in the North Department. Prophete tries to win support among local residents by focusing on modest projects such as ensuring regular garbage collection. Civil society organizations such as AFASDA are becoming more active in making the local judicial system more responsive to citizens' needs, particularly concerning the treatment of women. The positive developments we noted in the North Department and in Cap-Haitien are indeed meager. Moreover, continuing central government neglect of Haiti's second largest city will not only overshadow these modest community and social advances but also hold back Haiti's economy as a whole.

SANDERSON